Preschool–Grade 6

David Spares Saul

Sunday School Lesson for Preteens (Ages 11–12), 45–60 minutes

Main point: Overcome evil with good. Don't take revenge; respect those God puts in charge and let God be the judge.
Bible passage: 1 Samuel 24:1–22. Students read 1 Samuel 24:4–12 and 24:16–22 out loud themselves.
Memory verse: "And he said to David, Thou art more righteous than I: for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil." *1 Samuel 24:17 (KJV)* and "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." *Romans 12:21 (KJV)*
You need: a Bible for each student, paper or a notebook and a pen for each student, a whiteboard and a marker, and one take-home sheet for each student.
Before class: read 1 Samuel 18–24. Write both memory verses on the board. Decide who reads which verses, or go around the room a few verses each.

1. Opening game: Your Move (5–10 minutes)

Name one side of the room "pay back" and the other side "do good." Read each situation. Students walk to the side they would honestly be tempted to choose. 1) A friend shares your secret, and now you know one of theirs. 2) Someone trips you in the game, and now they are in front of you. 3) A classmate blamed you for something, and the teacher asks you about them. 4) Your sibling broke your thing, and you could break theirs. Ask: *Why does paying back feel fair? What does it actually fix?* Say: "David had the perfect chance to pay back the man who was trying to kill him."

2. Bible story: Students Read It (15 minutes)

Tell the beginning in your own words: God had chosen David to be king after Saul, and Saul was jealous and kept trying to kill him (1 Samuel 18:8–11, 24:11). After fighting the Philistines, Saul heard David was in the wilderness of En-gedi, and he took three thousand chosen men to seek him upon the rocks of the wild goats (24:1–2). By the sheepcotes was a cave. Saul went in, not knowing that David and his men were in the sides of the cave (24:3).

Read out loud: 1 Samuel 24:4–12. Old words in this passage:

- **Behold the day** (24:4): "this is the day"; **privily**: secretly, quietly; **skirt**: the edge or corner of the robe
- **his heart smote him** (24:5): his conscience hurt him
- **the LORD'S anointed** (24:6): the king God chose, anointed with oil (1 Samuel 10:1)
- **stayed his servants** (24:7): held his men back; **suffered them not**: did not let them
- **Wherefore hearest thou men's words** (24:9): why do you listen to people who say
- **bade me kill thee** (24:10): told me to kill you; **mine eye spared thee**: I chose to let you live
- **transgression** (24:11): wrongdoing; **huntest my soul**: hunt me to take my life
- **avenge me of thee** (24:12): pay you back for me

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Tell 24:13–15 in your own words: David quoted an old saying, "Wickedness proceedeth from the wicked," meaning evil comes from evil people, and he would not act like that (24:13). He asked why the king of Israel would chase someone as small as "a dead dog... a flea" (24:14), and he asked the LORD to judge and plead his cause (24:15).

Read out loud: 1 Samuel 24:16–22. Old words in this passage:

- **lifted up his voice, and wept** (24:16): cried out loud
- **more righteous than I** (24:17): more in the right; **rewarded**: paid back
- **established in thine hand** (24:20): made firm under your rule
- **cut off my seed** (24:21): wipe out my children and family; **sware**: made a promise before God
- **gat them up unto the hold** (24:22): went up to their stronghold, a safe place

3. Questions to ask (15 minutes)

1. David's men used God's name to push him toward revenge (24:4). How can people use "God wants this" to excuse something wrong?
2. David's heart smote him over a piece of cloth (24:5). Why does a tender conscience matter? How do we keep ours tender?
3. Saul was wrong, yet David called him "my lord the king" and bowed (24:8). What does respecting authority look like when the person in charge is wrong?
4. David said, "The LORD judge between me and thee" (24:12, 24:15). What changes inside you when you hand a wrong over to God?
5. Saul admitted, "I have rewarded thee evil" (24:17). Why did David's good do what an argument never could?
6. Romans 12:21 says to overcome evil with good. Where in your life is God asking you to do that?

4. Memory verse (5 minutes)

Old words in Romans 12:21: **be not overcome of evil** means don't let evil beat you by making you act like it; **overcome evil with good** means win by doing good. Read both verses together. Then students cover one phrase at a time and quiz a partner. Say 1 Samuel 24:17 this week; keep working on Romans 12:21 next week too.

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5. What this means for us (5–10 minutes)

Say: "David repaid Saul good for evil. Jesus did that for the whole world: 'God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us' (Romans 5:8, KJV). God loves you, and 'all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). Jesus is God manifest in the flesh, God who came as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). 'Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures' (1 Corinthians 15:3–4, KJV). We obey the gospel the way Peter preached it: 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.' (Acts 2:38, KJV) We **repent**, turning from sin, and our old self dies (Romans 6:6). We are buried with Jesus by baptism in His name, all the way under the water. **Remission** means our sins are washed away, and we rise to walk in newness of life, a brand-new life (Romans 6:4; Acts 22:16). And God fills us with the Holy Ghost, and we speak with other tongues as the Spirit gives utterance, which means as He gives the words (Acts 2:4). Jesus called this being born of water and of the Spirit (John 3:5)."
Pray with the students, and encourage them to talk with their parents and pastor about being baptized in Jesus' name and filled with the Holy Ghost. Never pressure a child.

6. Activity: Journal (10 minutes)

Each student writes privately. No one has to share. Write these three prompts on the board:

1. Who has wronged me, and what would "paying them back" look like?
2. What is one good thing I could do for that person this week instead?
3. Write a short prayer handing that hurt over to God, the judge who always does right.
   If there is time, invite a few volunteers to share one sentence.

This week: when you are tempted to get even, stop and do one good thing instead.

7. Prayer

"Dear God, You are the judge, and You always do right. Keep our consciences tender, give us respect for those You put over us, and help us overcome evil with good. Thank You for loving us and making a way to save us through Jesus. In Jesus' name, amen."

For the teacher: 1 Samuel 24:3 says Saul "went in to cover his feet"; this lesson tells it as "went into the cave." 1 Samuel 26 tells of a second time David spared Saul, if students want to read more.

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